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LONDON, JULY 1984

Contributors to *al-Serāt* express their own views and not necessarily those of the editorial hoard or the trustees. 1 he editor welcomes contributions and correspondence at the address below.

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Because of the size of this volume it has been decided not to publish the Autumn issues 1985 and 1986 of this journal.

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PREFACE

This special number of *Al-Serāt* contains papers which were either presented at, or, in some cases, subsequently submitted in longer written form to, the International Conference on the Imam Ḥusayn held in London from the 6th to the 9th of July, 1984. The event was jointly organized by the Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Muhammadi Islamic Centre, Toronto, Canada, to commemorate the 1400th *hijrī* anniversary of the birth of Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, the third Shʿī Imam and grandson of Muḥammad, the prophet of Islam, in 4 AH. Further details of the conference and speakers can be found in: Maryam Wdlings, 'Report on the International Seminar on Imam Ḥusayn. peace be upon him', *Al-Serāt* X/2 (Autumn, 1984), 3-12.

The papers have been arranged thematically under three headings, and within these headings the order is alphabetical, according to author. Given both the variety of ways in which the subjects were treated in the papers themselves, and the different backgrounds of the contributors, only an absolute minimum of uniformity has been imposed by the editors, and, while it is hoped that consistency has been maintained within each paper, such consistency should not be looked for between them. Dates, for example, usually appear in their *hijrī* form, but in some places they are given according to the Christian calendar, or in both forms; it should be clear from the context which system is being used. Qur'ānic quotations have been given throughout in the form of, e.g., 2:156. without further indication. The transliteration of Arabic names and terms follows the usual style of *Al-Serāt*, but in the case of other languages the editors have generally retained the transliterations given by each author.

The Muhanimadi Trust would like to thank the contributors and organizers for their cooperation and assistance, and for their kind patience in awaiting the delayed publication of these papers. In particular, they would like to thank Mahmoud Ayoub and Azim Nanji for their help and advice in the preparation of this volume, and Lynda Clarke for her translation of Professor al-Janhānī's contribution.

INTRODUCTION

This publication of the proceedings of the conference to commemorate the 1400th *hijra* anniversary of the birth the the Sayyid al-Shuhadā', the Imam Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, gives me the opportunity to say a few words of introduction about the Muhammadi Trust and the Muhammadi Islamic Centre for those whose do not already know about their operations and activities. The Muhammadi Trust was established in the United Kingdom in 1973, with its registered office in London, for the purpose, *inter alia*, of encouraging Islamic studies and disseminating knowledge of Islamic teachings: and its sister organization, the Muhammadi Islamic Centre of Canada, was set up in 1979, with the additional aim of awarding fellowships to students and scholars of Islam, and it has recently been registered under the name of the Muhammadi Islamic Foundation so as to allow it greater freedom and independence in its activities. Both organizations are anxious to strengthen unity among all Muslims, and, in particular, the youth. In pursuit of these objectives, the Trust has published a number of books and booklets in the English language. Some of these are translations of Arabic books on religious themes and topics, written by renowned scholars, and some are original works by scholars of international repute who have contributed to the study of Islam. The Trust also publish a journal, *Al-Serāt*, which prints articles on religious topics by eminent writers. Those who are familiar with this journal know that the utmost importance is given to the quality and standard of the articles, and, at the same time, full freedom to express views is allowed the writers so as to permit the publication of articles propounding diverse views with which the publishers may not necessarily agree. This effort of the Trust is directed towards the dissemination in English of knowledge concerning Islam in all its aspects.

Although a large body of literature on Islam exists in oriental languages such as Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, there is, in contrast, a dearth of such literature in English. Yet English is the only language with which our younger generation living in the Western world is familiar.

The diffusion and dissemination of knowledge is. according to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the religious duty of every Muslim, man or woman. The Prophet of Islam has enjoined us to acquire knowledge from the cradle to the grave. As Sa'dī said,

پئے علم چوں شمع باید گداخت کہ بے علم نتواں خدا را شناخت

'*to kindle the light of knowledge, one must necessarily melt like a candle; for how can one understand the divine Being without the glow of learning.*'

I will now say just a few words as my humble tribute to the great Imam whose memory we have honoured in this conference. As a gem of the purest rays, serenest sparkles and reflected light, the life of the Imam Ḥusayn mirrors the light of guidance through its every facet. It is no wonder that the Imam Ḥusayn is looked upon as an ideal by all who believe in righteous causes, who believe that no sacrifice is too great for the achievement of a noble aim, who believe that death for a righteous cause is the very acme of noble living and far preferable to a life of ignominy and degredation based on compromising principles. How rightly Kawar Mchandra Singh Bedi has said:

جی کے مرنا تو سب کو آتا ہے مر کے جینا سکھا دیا تو نے

'*Everybody knows that after life there is death;*
but it is you [O Ḥusayn] who has taught how to live by dying.'

As Thomas Carlyle, in his *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, has put it: 'The best lesson which we get from the tragedy of Karbala is that Husayn and his followers were rigid believers in God: they illustrated that numerical superiority does not count when it comes to truth and falsehood. The victory of Husayn, despite his minority, marvels me.'

On the plains of Karbalā', Ḥusayn showed what *jihād* stands for in Islamic terminology. He taught us, as no one else could have done,

that it does not mean aggrandisement or the flamboyant display of valour which cries out: 'One crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name.' He showed, as none else could have done, that to remain firm and steadfast in the hour of trial and tribulation, to surrender to the will of Allah with complete resignation is the zenith of martyrdom and *jihād*. He showed us that even the death and destruction of his dearest ones cannot deter a person from the performance of the appointed task, from the fulfillment of the ordained purpose, without the least hesitation, without the least demur, without a word or murmur of complaint. Who else but Ḥusayn could have prayed to Allah for the salvation of Muslims without any rancour or bitterness under the dagger of the assassin. And all this with the utmost serenity and calm which comes from supreme resignation to the will of Allah and complete submission to His divine purpose. As Yagana says,

ڈوب کر پار اتر گیا اسلام آپ کیا جانیں کربلا کیا ہے

Only after drowning did Islam survive. How is it possible for anyone to comprehend the meaning, message, and significance of Karbalā'?

Secretary to the Muhammadi Trust.

II
HISTORICAL AND DOCTRINAL PERSPECTIVES

THE IMAM ḤUSAYN: A STUDY IN THE ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF FREEDOM

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The history of man is a history of his liberation from both the internal and the external forces that lend to enslave him This history is not a uniform process. There is no such thing as an uninterrupted progression towards more and more freedom from one century to another. As we look at history, we notice long periods of slavery and very brief periods of freedom. It all depends upon which criterion we have in view to regard one or another period of history as more or less free. For instance, our times are an expression of vast freedom from bondage to nature in terms of victory over physical distance and also with respect to the highly developed aids to our senses and calculative powers, but it is also a period of enslavement of man by structures and systems which are intricate, massive, and ever-growing in their grip over both the private and the collective life of man. Human history is thereby a vastly varying ratio of freedom and slavery. If man is free in one sphere, there is no certainty that he will be equally free in other spheres of life. The overall situation is of a two-fold imbalance: a social imbalance wherein only a few are free and the majority is not, and a spiritual imbalance wherein the majority is materially free but internally a slave to uncertainty and fear.

What is freedom? The straightforward procedure is to define freedom from a material point of view, and this is what concerns the majority of the human race which is still, in spite of such a massive advancement of science and technology (we notice in the West), a victim of poverty, degradation, and exploitation. This immediately introduces the fact of regional imbalance which is a national and cultural expression of the social imbalance we have already mentioned. Both the facts, of imbalance in material freedom from poverty, and suffering due to starvation, and disease, and crude forms of exploitation (such as

slavery, bonded labour, and low wages on a global scale), and also imbalance of material freedom within one society which is backward but tolerates extremes of wealth in the hands of the few, and stark poverty for the millions, are interlinked because they are the consequences of a system which exploits many for the benefit of the few. Why the few regard themselves as justified in exploiting the many is not a material factor but an ideological one which is a complex unity of certain forms of self-dclinilions in terms of race, class, and community. The straightforward procedure to define freedom from a material viewpoint is thus made difficult. The most concrete forms of the lack of freedom are functions of highly complex and unconcrete forms of a rationality which again is not u straight thought-process to gain more and more efficiency to control the majority for a particular set of tangible gains. This rationality is a response of the few who control and exploit to certain fears they possess deep within themselves. These fears are many, and vary in their intensity depending upon the cultural strength of the group in question. What interests us here is that all those who appear to be free in material terms arc slaves to fears which they cannot handle on a materialistic plane. What is intriguing in this process is that one who deprives the other of his freedom should be a slave himself in a more tragic sense, namely, that *his material freedom is a veil over his real slavery.* We therefore correct the view we expressed at the outset regarding social and spiritual imbalance concerning the distribution of freedom both in the world as a whole and also within individual societies. In fact, there is no such thing as imbalance. The majority which lacks material freedom is interlocked with a minority which is outwardly materially free but inwardly as much and even more a slave to a vast body of fear and uncertainty. There is a symmetry between the outward lack of freedom on the part of the many and the inward lack of freedom in the case of the few. Owing to this symmetry people suffer for very long periods in history without ever trying to alter their material and psychological conditions. Freedom is therefore freedom from both external want and internal fear.

There have been four modes, among others, of consciousness of freedom enveloping both the outward and the inward, and these

modes are available to every human community in the form of different ideas and symbols. I.et us examine them first in order to provide a broad-based introduction to the Islamic concept of freedom.

The first mode of consciousness of freedom enveloping both the outward and the inward was perceived in a State of mind which could be described as an elated or intoxicated sense of one's self experiencing freedom, courage, and total bliss. This state of mind was a passing flash or an artificially induced condition through one sort of drug or another. In its nature this mode comes close to certain levels of experience in non-theistic meditation and contemplation as well. The charm of this mode of freedom lies in the liberation of self from its social and economic identity and momentary victory over internal uncertainties and fears. After these states are gone the individual re-enters his society as a slave of his social and economic condition and without any basic alteration in the inner structure of his self. All societies possess this mode of consciousness of freedom without making it an integral part of their society or psychology. This mode is worth mentioning because it fulfills our criterion that freedom in the real sense should include both the external and the internal. But it is a deficient mode because it is first on the level of feeling which does not last long; secondly, it is at the mercy of external inducements, and above all, it lacks a world-view that involves freedom as a conscious value.

As soon as man became conscious and determined to enquire into the true nature of what was so intensely true in terms of a momentary glimpse of freedom through a sudden flash or artificially induced state of mind, he developed three other modes of reflection on freedom. They were: (a) agnostic, (b) monistic, and (c) theistic.

The agnostic mode of thought can be further differentiated into a philosophical mode which is open to a monistic or theistic development and a psychological mode which is consciously atheistic. The former, namely, the philosophical, was what the Hellenistic school of thought came to be, and the principle which united the Platonic, Aristotlean, and Plotinian systems was that true Freedom lay in

man's liberation from his baser self and his ascent to a spiritual level. What distinguished man from animals was his reason, and what distinguished him as such was also the means of his salvation. Hence, purification and perfection of reason became the basic condition of human freedom. Only a philosopher, in the Platonic sense of the word, was a free man. Plato was perhaps the first person in history who knew that a free individual was possible only tn a just society. Hence, he proposed his ideal republic which continued to inspire all those who, like Plato, dreamed of an ideal social condition to nurture freedom and justice.

The agnostic mode of reflection on freedom took on a psychological form in Buddhism which identified desire as the root of all suffering. Desire is a consequence of the attachment to things, and the basis of this desiring is located in a false self-cousciousness that there is such a thing as a desiring soul (*atma*). The Buddhistic thought, particularly through its great exponent, Nagarjuna (2nd cent. AD), offers a totally new perspective to come out of the traditional dilemma of soul or no-soul, and suggested that there was only a dialectical basis for holding one view as against the other, whereas in a stale of *nirvana* (which was true freedom) all discourse ceased, for discourse required the duality of subject and object, self and not-self; and when such a state was reached, one was free from all suffering. One ceases to be an actor and becomes a stage. The implications of the Buddhistic perspective for philosophy in general are yet not fully worked out. but within the context of the Upanishadic philosophy of self-knowledge the Buddhistic conception of freedom was a highly revolutionary idea and was recognised as such.

As we turn to the Upanishads, we arc completely exposed to a thorough monism, the doctrine of the unity or oneness of being. All reality, both sensible and intelligible, is one. There is no such thing as one self confronting other selves and each confronting a nol-self. What is real is the Self, eternal, self-subsisting, partaking of all and yet independent of all. From the point of view of our concern with freedom, what interests us here is the way in which the Upanishads handle the problem of fear.

Fear logically requires somebody or something other than one. We fear something which, we believe, exists independently and is external to us. When fear is located within ourselves, it is a case of a deep conflict and alienation. We are in such cases both ourselves and the other. The Upanishads resolve this problem by simply stating that there is no other: there is only one. singular existence: and when this is realized, all fear is abolished. Monism is the only basis for freedom from all bondage and suffering. The difference between the Upanishads and Buddhism seems to be this: that both reach a point of total convergence about abolishing all dualism, except that Nagarjuna would not speak of one reality as a necessary condition of *moksha* or *nirvana*. Let us immediately add that all this highly impressive speculation on self and not-self and on freedom and bliss was not mere fantasy in the minds of a few philosophers. Both the world-views, Vedic and Buddhistic, influenced millions of people through centuries. The only objection which one may level against them is that they were indifferent to the structures of inequality and oppression in the social and economic order, thus entirely neglecting the material framework of freedom without which the spiritual quest is almost impossible for the majority of mankind. But this objection is equally applicable to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, for they too, if not totally neglectful, were inconsistent in their concern for social and economic justice.

The fourth mode of consciousness of freedom enveloping both the external and the internal dimensions of man is the thcistic, namely, that by consciously admitting and remembering that he is a slave to the God of the heavens and of the earth and all that is in all the visible and the invisible, intelligible and spiritual worlds, man is liberated from all bondage to men and things. History of human freedom now becomes a history of the prophetic breakthrough, how each prophetic moment was a moment of liberation from the false absolutes of race, nation, wealth, and power. Within this theislic liberation of mankind we notice four strands, (a) First is the process of becoming an individual: every prophet who was eventually given a commission first became an individual with respect to his race and community and extricated himself either from a pagan or a self-righteous conduct of his family

or clan; (b) Second was the lonely quest and withdrawal both in the outward and in the interior of his self which was at the same time a process of seeking community with the unseen and the spiritual; (c) Third was the unpremeditated and sudden experience of transcendence in the form of a voice or vision which overwhelms, transforms and informs the lonely seeker concerning a new dimension or knowledge and imparts to him his prophetic vocation; And (d) the fourth and final stage is of return to his people in order to call them to a new awareness and way of life which is like the first stage, namely, an individual versus his species, now. not withdrawing from them, but confronting them to awaken and warn them.

What distinguishes the theistic-prophctic mode of consciousness of freedom from the Vedic and Buddhistic modes is the concern of the former with four aspects of the question which are however deducible from the Vedic and Buddhistic formulations but are not so explicitly and intensely stressed as in the prophetic-theistic understanding. First is the birth of the individual who cuts himself off from his group, withdraws from it, and goes on his quest to relocate his individuality in a new world, both moral and spiritual. This is not the same thing as the Indian preoccupation with self. Here, the individual man is the central concern. Freedom at this stage implies the strength on the part of the individual to leave his society. Second is the mysterious and bewildering prospect of the lonely quest within which the individual seeks community with worlds, both invisible and unborn. He becomes the epitome of liberated humanity and of the human potential to be free. Such an individual was Abraham in whom all nations became free, for he was both a single individual and a plural humanity. Unlike the Vedic and Buddhistic modes of consciousness of freedom the theistic-prophetic mode is intensely occupied with the experience of transcendence, objectivity, and certitude, whose realization is not from ‘within’ but from ‘outside’, and this is vastly consequential for its conception of freedom. The experience of a transcendent and overwhelmingly powerful Reality brings to the individual a total sense of inadequacy, finitude and dependence. He loses his freedom before the freedom of the Almighty God. This loss of freedom on the part of

man, this entry into the servanthood of his total person before God, and this experience of being enveloped by a knowledge and might whose source and extent he can never fully know makes him an *ʿabd*. He becomes a free *bashar* as he cuts himself off from his community and goes on his quest. With the experience of a Reality that transcends him he turns from a *bashar* to an *ʿabd* of God. It is this *ʿabdiyya* as a source of both spiritual and historical freedom which is absent in the Indian philosophies of *nirvana*. Furthermore as a *free slave* (it is in this paradox that we discover the true significance of the theistic mode of consciousness of freedom) man enters his society to confront it, awaken it, and liberate it. Whoever hears his call and follows him goes through the same double transformation — becoming free *vis-à-vis* his former world and becoming a slave *vis-à-vis* the newly discovered and fully realized awareness of a transcendent God.

The Islamic conception of freedom is an example of the theistic mode of consciousness. To discuss some of its basic features, we should now turn to the Qur'ān which is a revelation of both *insāniyya* and *ʿabdiyyā* (the true humanity and the true servanthood of man). Unlike the Bible, the Qur'ān is both consistent and explicit on the question of both spiritual and historical freedom. The Qur'ān deals with freedom on theological, mystical and social levels. All these levels are inter-connected for they were all one in the person of the Prophet whose ministry involved both the religious and the social transformation of man.

With respect to the Qur'ān, let us in the first, place refer to a very significant passage in the sura of Joseph: *O my fellow prisoners! are diverse lords belter, or God. the One. the Almighty?* (12:39)

It is one of those verses in the Qur'ān which contain a world of meaning, though the words employed to convey it are few and simple. Consider the phrase 'fellow prisoners'. Joseph is in prison along with two other prisoners. They constitute a company which is representative of the world as a whole. Apparently, they are all prisoners deprived of their freedom in its outward and social sense. But is Joseph a prisoner

in reality? With the awareness of the faith he has in one Almighty Lord he is inwardly free though a companion in prison with other prisoners. Is this not the case with all men and women of God who outwardly share the tyranny of the social conditions they share with their fellow men but are inwardly free, for their hearts are with God? Joseph turns the prison into a sehool: are diverse lords better, or one singular. All-powerful Lord? He transforms the meaning of the word 'prisoners': it is not the material condition which imprsons man but his inner condition, his mental slavery to diverse lords which master him through a variety of false hopes and fears that makes even an outwardly open space into a dark and compressed dungeon. Joseph, being already a free man due to his inner consciousness, makes his fellow prisoner taste what real freedom is. The truth of the matter is that inner freedom precedes and survives outer freedom. One does not increase one's inner freedom by getting out of a physical prison, nor decreases it by entering into it. Joseph was a son of Jacob before and after entering the prison! His lineage was a lineage of freedom.

The first principle of the Islamic conception of freedom is therefore based on the internal awareness that there is only one Lordship, namely, of God; and it is this awareness which makes a slave a free man. and without it a free man is a slave. With this awareness a prisoner is free in spite of being locked up inside a dark cell, and without it, the one who imprisons him is the real prisoner.

The second principle is related to the dynamics of social transformation, namely, *jihād*, a principle that requires the believers to fight in the way of God and in the way of freedom: *How should you not fight for the cause of God and of the oppressed among men and of the women and children who are crying 'Our Lord! Bring us forth from out of this township of which the people are oppressors! O, give us from Thy Presence some protecting friend! O, give us from Thy Presence some defender!'* (4:75) Nowhere is the cause of God so closely linked with the cause of the oppressed as in the Qur'ānic call. It is this dimension of a complete linkage between the spiritual and social meanings of freedom that the Qur'ān upholds throughout its discourse that makes it a unique text

both for contemplation and social action. It is in this framework that one can appreciate how both the Mcccan and the Medinan ministries of the Prophet are a part of a larger totality, that tawhid is also *ḥurriyya* (freedom). Watch the close connection between lighting in the cause of God and fighting in the cause of the oppressed, and also notice the list of the oppressed — men. women and children who cry to their Lord for protection and help. The prayer is answered through the decision on the part of the believers to fight for their liberation. The basis for *jihād* is both a divine sanction and also a response to the cries of the oppressed to go to their assistance. The action that flows from *tawḥīd* is now a part of a vast historical process. The Qur'ān makes the matter very clear by distinguishing between two types of believers one group which is satisfied with what they believe and remain in their homes, and the other group winch believes and goes out to fight in the way of God, risking their lives and giving up their comforts: *Those of the believers who sir still, other than those who have a disability, are not on an equality with those who strive in the way of God with their wealth and lives.* (4:95)

Īmān (=faith) is inextricably joined with jihād, and it is the latter which makes Islam a historical force and iLs conception of freedom socially and politically relevant.

The third principle of the Islamic conception of freedom is based on its view on *al-ākhir* (eschatology,-life hereafter). The secret of what we have said earlier, that with awareness of the Lordship of one Almighty Lord a slave becomes a free man and without this awareness a free man is in reality a slave, can now be unveiled: what strengthens a man of God to go through the externally produced conditions of oppression and hardship without suffering from any agitation at the inward level of his mind and heart is his knowledge of his true origin and destiny: *We are of God, and unto Him we are returning.* (2:156)

We can say now that this sense of origin and destiny is the cornerstone of the Islamic view of freedom. Man becomes free and remains free as he constantly remembers both the words and the meanings of this remarkably simple and profound verse in the Qur'ān, for therein both

anthropology, which is spiritual, and eschatology, which is historical, arc conjoined. Let us recall a crucial moment of prophetic history which is common to both the Bible and Qur'ān. The occasion is when Moses is confronting the Pharaoh who decides to confront Moses through his magicians: *And when the magicians came they said unto Pharaoh: 'Will there surely he a reward for us if we are victorious?' He said: 'Yes, and you will then surely be of those brought near.' Moses said unto them: 'Throw what you are going to throw.' They they threw down their cards and staffs and said: 'By Pharaoh's might we verily are victorious.' Then Moses threw his staff and it swallowed that which they did falsely display. And the magicians were flung prostrate, crying: 'We believe in the Lord of the Worlds. The Lord of Moses and Aaron.' Pharaoh said: 'You put your faith in him before I give you leave? Lo! He doubtless is your chief who taught you magic! But verily you shall come to know. Verily I will cut off your hands and feet alternately, and verily I will crucify you every one.' They said: 'It is no harm, for unto our Lord we shall return.'* (26: 41-50)

This straightforward narrative sums up all that is central not only to the question under discussion but also to the victory of the prophetic revelation over a world deeply immersed in the occult and the magical. But let us concentrate upon the narrative to bring out its significance for the Islamic concept of freedom. Threatened with certain death, the magicians said with a surprising degree of calm: 'It is no harm whether you crucify us and cut off our hands and feet, for we shall return to our Lord.' What was it that shall return to God, while their bodies lay on the ground dead and cut into pieces? What faith was it that made them so fearless about death? We cannot go into the depth of these questions within the limited scope of this paper. For our purposes it is sufficient to point out that true freedom, as the story of the conversion of the magicians brings out so forcefully, lies in victory over fear of death. This certainty that there is life after death and there is a sure returning to God was also at the heart of the social struggle of Islam. It inspired the Muslims to fight in the way of God, to kill and get killed, to leave their homes and families, to suffer hardship and misery, to have the courage which drew its strength from their faith in an invisible but more real world, and to confront the might and power of the world. Islam entered

history not only with a clear *tawḥīd* but also with a complete confidence in the *ākhira*.

When the Prophet stood up to deliver his farewell sermon at the close of his mission, he faced a crowd which consisted of two kinds of people—those who had followed him from the very beginning of the movement, and had suffered persecution, and those who had joined the fold of Islam after the Prophet had victoriously entered Mecca and who had seen the usefulness of embracing an ascendent religion which could bring them both economic and political gains. The history of Islam now enters a very crucial phase. Similarly, the Islamic conception of freedom will be tried now under a new threat of the opportunist group ultimately taking command. It is in this very problematic phase of Islamic history that the role of the People of the House of the Prophet obtains a profound and lasting significance.

First and foremost is the *ḥuzn* (sorrow) of Fāṭima which is representative of the alienation of a Muslim in a Muslim society. What went wrong that the very daughter of the Prophet should impose upon herself a total withdrawal from the community which her father had founded? This question is not raised here in a polemical manner. This is not the issue here. The reasons for the alienation of Fāṭima with the post-prophetic developments are associated with a process, and unless we know it in its true nature and significance we will not be able to appreciate and value the martyrdom of Ḥusayn.

Whatever we say now should be very carefully and patiently studied. There is sufficient room here to become excited on sectarian levels and lose sight of the basic challenges that confront the student of the first century of Islam. Let us simply state that the institution we know as the Caliphate, however necessary, involved political power. Again, however, we go on repeating that the religious and the political constitute a unity in Islam and therefore one cannot say that the Caliphate involved just political power; we should remember that a Caliph, though a *khalifa* of the Messenger and then a *khalifa* of the previous Caliph, was primarily an *amīr* of the believers. It was this

amāra which became the source of all later problems. The traditional distinction between the Rightly Guided Caliphate and the Caliphate of Damascus and Baghdad rested on the evaluation that the *amāra* of the first four Caliphs was in the service of Islam, whereas the *amāra* of the later Caliphs was more in their self-interest. The very fact that the title, *amīr*, got associated with Muʿāwiya in its exclusively political connotation should demonstrate the validity of the analysis that is being made here that it was in the very nature of *amāra* to assert itself as an autonomous power which could exploit every economic, social and religious value lor its legitimization. The *ḥuzn* of Fāṭima at the very inception of the Caliphate can now be understood as her profound scepticism about the institution which, for a time, will he close to the *sunna* of the Prophet, but which, owing to the very nature of the *amāra* on which it rests, will assert itself as the gravest threat to the *ḥurriyya* of Islam. In modern terms, we can say that state as an all-embracing institution tends to become a source of alienation. In Islamic terms, state is a lordship of man over man; and it is in this sense that it may become a god by itself, and, as it puls on the garb of indispensability and desirability, its true nature of being a false divinity is not easily discernable. It is for this reason that I regard 'Islamic state' as a contradiction in terms—how could these two terms be used together, one which regards God as the only l.ord, and another which competes with God for total loyalty and surrender? I would prefer the term 'republic' to 'state', for the reason that the former does not possess the absolutist perspective of the idea of state. One should always remember that 'state' is neither good nor bad (for these judgements are applicable to governments), and in this sense 'stae' becomes a transcendental concept with its own mystique and ritual. Islam of the Qur'ān has nothing to do with this transcendence of the secular. The Islam of the People of the House of the Prophet is a constant *jihād* against this false god which took possession of Islamic history since its very beginning, particularly with the Caliphates of Damascus and Baghdad.

It is part and parcel of the Shīʿī conception of history that, whenever *amāra*, which is the basic constitutent of *khilāfa*. becomes an exclusively political institution, and 'state' demands such loyalty and

surrender from Muslims as is due only to God, a man or a part will rise to protest against it, whereas in the traditional Sunnī conception there has always been doubt regarding protest against the established Caliphate, and this is very obvious in the term *fitna*, which is indiscriminately used for every protest against the state. But from a Shīʿī point of view, it is not only to establish *sharīa* but also to preserve *tawḥīd* that clear protest should be launched. Hence the Shīʿī theory of protest is not only of moral hut also of theological significance.

The post-prophetic developments involved a three-fold process: a non-prophetic central authority, division among Muslims as to the criteria, nature, and role of this authority, and territorial expansion. The last-mentioned brought into Islam such power and wealth as was possessed by earlier empires. Outwardly there was expansion and inwardly there was deep conflict of interest and ambition. The tragic events during the Caliphate of ʿUthmān demonstrated how basic was the rift between those who wielded power and those who felt alienated from it. The Caliphate of ʿAlī brought the conflict into the open. The Battle of Jamal was the saddest of all conflicts because the parties on both sides were led by Muslims who were among the first of the converts to Islam. The Battle of Siftin and its inconclusive end was a further clarification of the rift between those who upheld the Islamic ideals and those who were dedicated to personal gain and ambition. All this happened within twenty-eight years of the Prophet's death. The ideal unity of the religious and the political had soon become more of a political system which controlled and exploited the religious. The withdrawal of the Imam Hasan from politics could be understood as a profoundly insightful decision because by withdrawing the Imam upheld the autonomy and superiority of the religious that a time would come that from a household that had then withdrawn into seclusion a clear and unmistakeablc protest would arise to confront the political and unmask its true nature and intention. Thus, the withdrawal of the Imam Ḥasan was a preparation for the purity and authenticity of the protest of Ḥusayn.

The *amāra* which was at the basis of the Caliphate became clearly

visible when Muʿāwiya nominated his son as his successor, as the *amīr* of the faithful. The post-prophetic development had now reached a climax. Ḥusayn was the last surviving member of the divinely approved group of the *mubāhila*, and on him now rested the overall responsibility to confront the established system. Ḥusayn laid down all the rules of *jihād*, now right within the body politic of Islam. The rules were both general and specific: the general rules remained the same as they were for any *jihād* as laid down by the Qur'ān and *sunna*, but the specific rules pertained to the model which Ḥusayn himself represented. We are concerned here more with the latter.

As Husyan left Medina, he pointed to the first principle of the archetypal *jihād* in the way of freedom, namely, the principle of *ghurba*. The *mujāhid* now is not only a *muḥājir* but also a *gharīb*. By avoiding the *ḥajj*, he safeguarded the *ḥurma* of the Kaʿba, another principle for the *mujāhidīn* within the body politic of Islam that their action should not violate the sanctity of the Kaʿba or for that reason of any mosque or shrine. By telling his companions on the night of 'Āshūrā' that they were free to leave him, he made plain another priniple that each one of them should personally and freely arrive at the choice to lay down his life for the cause for which Ḥusayn had left Medina. This personal choice was like the first decision of accepting Islam and giving the testimony that Muḥammad was the Apostle of God. To follow Ḥusayn was not like one of the obligatory acts with the Muslim requirements. To follow Ḥusayn was now to accept Islam again as individuals, as free men. In a strange and symbolic sense, Ḥusayn made his companions feel free to take a very serious decision, for now to remain with him, to re-enter Islam in this sense, was to suffer and die the following day. There was no promise of any territorial or economic benefit, just the promise of life hereafter and the pleasure of God and of His Messenger. Never was the decision to accept Islam so close to faith in *ākhira*. Ḥusayn made Karbalā' a symbol of perfect unity of *tawḥīd* and *al-ākhira*, and a unity like this can be expressed only through martyrdom. Only by suffering a tragic end did Ḥusayn become an immortal symbol of protest against, and rejection of the false god of *amāra* and 'state'. As such, the tragic end became a mirror for an inner and more lasting victory.

The *ḥurriyya* which Ḥusayn symbolized was both linked with its general meaning in the Islamic perspective on *ʿabdiyya* as the basis of freedom from all forms of slavery, and also distinct from it in its emphasis on how this *ḥurriyya* could be asserted and preserved within the historical framework of the Islamic body politic. Muslim society, like any other society, is likely to become, under the weight of the structures it creates to institutionalize and legitimize power, a dangerously enslaving system. Only a consciousness like that of Ḥusayn could preserve a Muslim mind from being exploited by the institutional and structural despotism which could be made sacred in the guise of a self-righteous 'orthodoxy'. Hence the Islamic conception of freedom as it emerges out of the life and martyrdom of Ḥusayn rests on the following principles, (i) *J̌ihād* is not only striving in the Way of God but also in the way of the oppressed, (ii) A Muslim is one who, while affirming that there is only One Real God, is on the alert throughout his historical journey, and should identify both empirically and conceptually the false gods of every epoch, and they could be concealed behind an apparently sanctioned symbol or virtue, namely order and solidarity, or could be transparent in terms of the self-glorification of race, language, nation, or ideology, (iii) The greatest threat to Islam lies from within the body politic of Islam itself wherein structures and systems could very subtly replace God and instil in the minds of Muslims the fear of the finite in place of the fear of the Infinite. And (iv) The philosophy of revolution that follows this view of freedom in Islam involves (a) a critical consciousness of structures and systems, (b) a radical view of history as a process of liberation from, or enslavement by, the false absolutes, (c) a reconstruction of social order after the norms of quest and humility in the Way of God, and (d) a working together with the rest of mankind in the common task of creating such conditions in the world as ensure freedom, justice, and peace.

We are now at the threshold of a new era. Everywhere there is a rediscovery of the spiritual resources for both individual and collective transformation. From Iran to Latin America, though in different forms and modes, there is a vast effort to liberate man from both the internal

and external forces of oppression. Each community of man has its own heritage, for God has not left any community without a guide. Our heritage is Ḥusayn, and for us his name represents the whole realm of *ḥurriyya*. May God help us in remembering him when he stood alone in Karbalā', for it is in his loneliness that we come to realise what it really means to say: *lā ilāha* (there is no god) *illā 'llāh* (but God).